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## **SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIAL**

### **Neoliberalism, cities and education in the Global South/North**

Special Issue Editors: Kalervo N. Gulson<sup>a</sup> and Thomas C. Pedroni<sup>b</sup>

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This special issue is premised on the idea that cities are being reshaped in myriad ways by neoliberal forms of globalization (Sassen, 2006), and that educational policy process and practices are co-constitutive of this process of urban restructuring, with implications for issues of justice. For the most part these connections are conspicuously absent from educational analyses, with exceptions highlighting the continuity of neoliberal logics across housing policies supporting gentrification, market-friendly managerial forms of urban governance, school 'accountability' regimes centred on high-stakes testing, and the marketization of schooling (e.g. Lipman, 2004). In building on this existing work, the papers in this issue have two key functions. The first is to build on emerging scholarship at the nexus of urban studies, broadly conceived, and education, to demonstrate the deep interconnections between neoliberalism, the city, and education policy. The second is to highlight how this interplay of globalization, neoliberalism, the city, cultural politics, and policy unfolds in a variety of national and geospatial contexts. The contributors document how educational politics of urban contexts in the United States, India, Canada, South Africa and Brazil should be understood as sites in which neoliberal forms of globalization are localised, reproduced, and potentially contested.

Also framing this issue is globalization being understood as a set of overarching macro level processes, characterised by advances in global communications, the new hyper-mobility of capital, and space-time compression (e.g. Harvey, 1989; Held & McGrew, 2005), while concomitantly manifesting as sets of micro processes and practices that can reinforce and challenge the determination of global macro processes (e.g. M.P. Smith, 2001). For example, Sassen (2006) argues that globalization should also be understood in terms of its *multiple localisations*, or the variety of ways in which globalization both impacts and is impacted by local contexts, particularly in what she calls *global cities* (Sassen, 2006). Critics of Sassen have in turn broadened her conception of global cities (N. Smith, 2002), arguing that it is not just the financial centres of the global north, but also the production centres of the south, that emerge as key centres and complex mediators of neoliberal globalization. In various permutations neoliberal globalization is seemingly omnipresent and omnipotent as part of the common sense of a globalised public policy field. This global policy field is characterised by a pervading

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economistic and individualistic social imaginary of contemporary educational life, and is comprised in policy terms of initiatives that adhere to notions of market efficiency (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). This has consolidated and reified education as ‘central to the production of the requisite human capital needed to achieve the maximum competitiveness within the global economy for individuals and nations alike’ (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 186). The centrality of the market across all aspects of human life (Burchell, 1996) has radically shifted socio-spatial conceptions of citizenship and the individual, and thus the role of schooling.

Against this backdrop, the papers in this issue speak to two complementary but analytically distinguishable aspects of the interplay of education, globalization, cities, and neoliberalism. The first aspect relates to the macro relationships among globalization, cities, and schools, particularly in terms of the stratifying dynamics that exacerbate already existing inequalities related to race, ethnicity, language, class, and gender—inequalities entailing differential access to the educational, material, cultural, and political resources of the city. The second aspect deals with the cultural politics, and logics, of these changes in the city. This recognises that globalization is not simply imposed on the city, but rather becomes insinuated in the fabric of the city through the actions and the agency of local actors and social movements. Rather than regarding cities and the process of urban policy formation as empty spaces in which capital simply gets what it wants, this approach works to uncover how the stratifying elements of globalization and neoliberalism are produced and reproduced on the ground in cities and schools in everyday life (De Certeau, 1984; Gramsci, 1971). Yoon’s paper in this issue identifies how the marketization of education has transformed the meanings, practices, projects and imaginaries of the city, most notably through the dismantling of historical connections between schools and neighbourhoods. Yoon contends that the outcome of this dismantling is the creation of new projects of *global city communities*, which are manifest in young people’s complex experiences of school choice in Vancouver, and production of new dynamics of social disparity and urban polarization. The complexities of marketization are also evident in Lipman’s paper, especially in the identification of the cultural politics of neoliberalism as a social process and the role of various social actors in neoliberalization of education. From this perspective, neoliberalism in education is produced ‘on the ground’ through the actions of teachers and parents who are recruited to or align themselves with education markets and privatization. This involves examining the subject positions available to parents and teachers and students in the context of neoliberal restructuring and the circulation of neoliberal ideologies. Lipman explores this neoliberalization on the ground in relation to the production of common sense around charter schools and educational choice as an aspect of winning the consent of parents and teachers to hegemonic neoliberal urbanism.

In this special issue we are also particularly concerned with the take up of neoliberal forms of globalization in schooling and higher education in cities, in both the Global North and South. There is a troubling inadequacy inherent in denoting the Global South and Global North, related most clearly to the invocation of a uni-directional, mostly paternal and exploitative set of relationships; whether these be of capital, of resources, of people, and so forth. Alternatively, following critical development studies, we might see the North and South in both politico-economic terms, pertaining to development, and in geographical terms (Riggs, 2007). As such an important conceptual framework for dealing with ideas of the North and South is the mutually constitutive nature of notions such as the global and local (Massey, 2005; M.P. Smith, 2001), especially the relationship to neoliberalism and space (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Understanding contemporary challenges to education in a globalised world requires attendance to space and

place, and to scale; the global, national, regional, local (Robertson, 2000; Thiem, 2009), and to concepts and phenomena such as transnationalism that complicate understandings of and relations between space and place, global and local (Jackson, Crang, & Dwyer, 2004). The papers in this special issue, while not explicitly taking up spatial theorising, nonetheless speak to a complicating of the global as producing the local, and correspondingly of the local (usually conflated with place) as always the 'victim' of the global (Massey, 2005). The papers in this special issue provide empirical and conceptual interventions that speak more to complex, relational understandings of neoliberal globalization. A relational understanding posits that:

... local places are not simply always the victims of the global; nor are they always politically defensible redoubts *against* the global. Understanding space as the constant open production of the topologies of power points to the fact that different 'places' will stand in contrasting relations to the global. (Massey, 2005, p. 101, original emphasis)

It is this that complicates ideas of the Global North and South, that relations between specific places will both reinforce and challenge enduring relations between and within nations, such as (post)colonialism. Kamat's paper in this issue focuses on the role of higher education privatization in India within the remaking of the city of Hyderabad and the region of Andhra Pradesh in both response to and in the production of neoliberal globalization. Neoliberal reforms in Indian higher education are closely connected to the role of Hyderabad in the high-tech networked society. Kamat's analysis of the dynamics underlying the region's success in becoming a global hub for the production of knowledge workers points to the complex aspects of the mutually constitutive role of city regions and the global context of capital flows in reshaping urban life today. Pedroni's paper deals with a city in decline, the previous auto-giant and hub of US industrial power, Detroit. While Detroit has a diminishing role in global production and lacks a financial services hub, Pedroni argues that it participates in the ongoing neoliberalization of cities. Manoeuvring to reposition the city as the global hub of mobility technology, metropolitan Detroit's neoliberal leadership advances particular development strategies in urban education, housing, infrastructure, and governance, all with significant implications for understanding urban social exclusion more generally.

This contestation of neoliberalism is important for, while there have been questions concerning the legitimacy and efficacy of neoliberalism following the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 (e.g. Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010), it seems that the underlying assumptions of neoliberal globalization remain intact. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) have noted this conundrum in relation to institutional critics of neoliberal globalization like George Soros, Jeffrey Sachs and Joseph Stiglitz, and from political leaders like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton. While all of these critics have challenged the outcomes of neoliberal globalization, such as entrenching poverty in the Global South, or consolidating inequalities in certain urban areas of the Global North, what remains untouched are the contradictions of neoliberal globalization. For these critics, and leaders, these contradictions remain trapped in a neoliberal social imaginary, in which the state is the key generator of social and educational policies. However, these policies are viewed 'largely in terms of the contribution they (and the self-capitalizing, entrepreneurial individuals they produce) are able to make to enhance the competitiveness of nations (and individuals) within the global economy' (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 191). As Hursh and Henderson identify in their paper, neoliberal policies work to marketize significant arenas of human life, with ramifications for non-human life. For example, these authors identify how neoliberalism elevates the market and profit above considerations of climate change and environmental sustainability. Yet, in spite

of considerable damage to economic equality, education and the environment, neoliberal policy approaches remain dominant, marginalising alternatives. As part of this reimagining, Hursh and Henderson engage in the complicated question of what kind of world we want to live in, contending that rather than a self-perpetuating neoliberalism, people have responsibility for our relationships with one another and our built and natural environment. Other papers in this issue (Gandin, Lipman, Kamat) also speak to the important role of social movements in providing not only repudiation of neoliberal initiatives, but also in creating alternative forms of social and political processes and practices. Thus, the papers in this issue will attempt to explain *what* the neoliberal globalizing dynamics are, and *why* these dynamics can and, however complicatedly, should be resisted in education and beyond. Many of the papers in this issue provide analyses involving careful, often ethnographic, readings of the various strategies and tactics in which differentially empowered and differently interested groups and individuals engage as they organise for battle on the city's various fields of social power, including in the areas of education, housing, infrastructure planning, and governance (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). Thus, the papers will be concerned with exploring *how* neoliberal elements of globalization are enacted in cities, and, by implication, *how* they might be resisted. As Gandin outlines, in his paper on citizen schooling and deliberative democracy in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the social imaginary of education can be expanded through the construction of social movements and the generation of globalizations from below.

Finally, we want to make a point concerning the role of theory. The historical lineage of the term neoliberalism, at least in urban studies, is closely related to the restructuring of North American cities (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). This special issue builds on this work while also trying to call attention, albeit in a small way, to what Connell (2007) calls the dominance of 'metropolitan theory'. This special issue includes papers by scholars located in, utilising theory from, or undertaking work on education, neoliberalism and cities of, the Global South. Nonetheless, knowledge about neoliberalism has been primarily a Northern undertaking with a paucity of research from the Global South. In this issue we have tried to attend to this issue, noting that as the majority of education and social science journals are either published or edited in the UK and US, it is difficult to cite other resources as part of academic practice. Furthermore, while we can point to some of the contributor's institutional locations in the Global South, there is also a spatial fetishism to this identification, for academics working in the Global South are also diasporic and transnational. Nonetheless, despite this, an important aim of this special issue is to challenge, and rework, globalization and neoliberalism as constructs endemic to the Global North. For example, Gulson and Fataar's paper looks at how school choice has been introduced in post-apartheid South Africa. The authors apply ideas concerning neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality that emanate from the Global North to the case of marketization in South Africa, while also trying to attend to the limits of these Northern ideas that are both intellectual undertakings and policy manifestations. This includes identifying the production of 'home-grown' neoliberalism in South Africa, as part of a post-apartheid politics and policy frame. Gandin's paper on citizen schooling also takes up this rethinking of theory, through identifying the limits of the idea of the global city, an argument that global cities can be created not just through financial flows, but also through social and political agitation associated with the coalescing of global social movements.

Overall, we hope this collection, when taken together, will enable an examination of the tactical and strategic questions which social movements encounter, and which are engendered in the process of yielding to, assimilating, resisting, or reshaping neoliberalism's global inertia.

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